



SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Safety Sense



1LT Jessica Barnes: with us today by design, not luck!

On the morning of November 1, 2014, 1LT Jessica Barnes was traveling on Hwy 20, West of Trail City, SD. It was not yet 8 am, so the young officer was well rested for the day's activities. She was traveling to Rapid City on the two lane highway just before dawn. As she was driving, a pickup truck traveling east bound crossed the center line into her path. She took appropriate evasive action to attempt to steer clear however the other vehicle never corrected and continued on its path directly towards her. As Jessica slowed and continued to steer right, off of the road, the truck continued uncorrected towards her Ford Escape. With a steep ditch to her right, she felt she had no other option; she attempted to avoid the truck by steering back to the left. Unfortunately this was the time the other driver realized his position and attempted to correct. The two vehicles impacted head on, grille to grille at an estimated combined impact speed in excess of 90 MPH. The impact and weight of the other vehicle caused LT Barnes vehicle to roll onto its left side.

Understandably dazed, 1LT Barnes wanted to clear herself from the auto. She released the seatbelt and began searching for her cell phone. However, almost immediately, law enforcement was on scene. They happened to be in the area searching for a reported drunk driver in (you guessed it) a pickup truck. After extricating

herself from the wreckage, she found she did not have any significant injuries. She was very fortunate as one of the occupants of the other vehicle is now paralyzed from the incident. Her minor injuries can be attributed to the sudden deceleration, proper use of seatbelts and deployment of airbags. She was evaluated at a nearby hospital and released.

In a fraction of a second, the vehicles safety equipment activated: seatbelts locked, airbags deployed. The design of today's vehicles accepted a bulk of the impact like a shock absorber and the anti-lock brakes prevented her

ity of a head on impact is reduced significantly.

All too often the old excuses are heard about not wearing seat belts. Many of these myths are dispelled on the NHTSA website <http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/ciot/stats.html>

Here are some other seatbelt facts: 61% of fatal motor vehicle crashes occur at night, from 6pm to 6am. Of all passenger vehicle crashes involving ejection of one or more occupants, 79% suffered fatal injuries. In 2012, if all passenger vehicle occupants age 5 and over had worn seatbelts, an additional 3031 lives would have been saved, that is twice the lives lost in the RMS Titanic disaster. During the nationwide "Click it or ticket" campaign over the past 5 years, more than 3,000,000 seatbelt citations have been issued.

According to the American Journal of Epidemiology, proper seatbelt and airbag deployment reduce mortality by 63% in these types of collisions. (<http://aje.oxfordjournals.org/content/153/3/219.full>)

Remember, when it comes to seat belts: Get it together.



The wreckage that remains of the NTV operated by 1LT Barnes after being hit head-on by a suspected DUI. (photo provided by SSG Dan Heil)

from losing control and sliding uncontrolled. All of the safety devices work to improve the survivability of vehicle collisions. However, the number one safety and life saving device in the vehicle is the seat belt. Without it, and unless it is used unconditionally, the survivabil-

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As I watched the chainsaw rip through my jeans, I was upset at the thought that I was going to have to buy another pair. I could see the jagged tear and realized that maybe, just maybe, I should check whether the blade cut into to my leg as well.

Feeling no pain, I set down the chainsaw, walked up to the house, went into the bathroom and took off my jeans. There was a ragged gash in my leg, but it was not very deep and there was little bleeding. Thinking I may have escaped serious injury, I probed the wound, still feeling no pain. I wasn't sure if that was a good thing. After cleaning the wound with peroxide and cutting off the loose skin, I decided a trip to the emergency room was in order.

A doctor took a quick look at my leg and decided I needed staples to close the wound. Up to this point, I still had not felt any pain. Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. After a nice, pain-numbing shot of Lidocaine, the doctor stapled my leg back together, wrote me a prescription and sent me on my way for my next outdoor adventure. When I reflect on what happened that day, I realize how much worse it could have been. I was wearing the proper eye protection, steel-toe boots and gloves, but I gave no

thought to protecting my legs. If I had not let go of the chainsaw trigger, this incident might have turned out much differently.

I should have paid more attention to what I was doing and not let down my guard. What if I had been home alone and needed assistance getting back into the house or calling an ambulance? What if the chainsaw blade struck me in the head or face rather than my leg? When I think how much worse this incident could have been, I consider myself pretty lucky.

At the workplace, we tend to operate more safely. Once at home, however, many of us have the tendency to relax standards. That's when we get hurt. Safety must be a process that we take home and use in every situation, even if it's a task we've done hundreds of times before. Had I paid more attention to what I was doing that day, I might not have ruined a favorite pair of jeans — not to mention gashed my leg with a chainsaw.

FYI

Operating a chainsaw can be dangerous. Fortunately, you can reduce the potential for injuries by wearing the proper personal protective equipment and practicing safe operating procedures. Here are some tips from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to help keep you safe.

Before starting a chainsaw

- Check controls, chain tension and all bolts and handles to ensure they are functioning properly and adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Make sure the chain is always sharp and the lubri-

cation reservoir is full.

- Start the saw on the ground or on another firm support. Drop starting is never allowed.

- Start the saw at least 10 feet from the fueling area, with the chain's brake engaged.

Fueling a chainsaw

- Use approved containers for transporting fuel to the saw.
- Dispense fuel at least 10 feet away from any sources of ignition when performing construction activities. No smoking during fueling.
- Use a funnel or flexible hose when pouring fuel into the saw.

- Never attempt to fuel a running or hot saw.

Chainsaw safety

- Clear away dirt, debris, small tree limbs and rocks from the saw's chain path. Look for nails, spikes or other metal in the tree before cutting.
- Shut off the saw or engage its chain brake when carrying the saw on rough or uneven terrain.
- Keep your hands on the saw's handles, and maintain secure footing while operating the saw.
- Proper personal protective equipment must be worn when operating the saw, which includes hand, foot, leg, eye, face, hearing and head protection.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Be careful that the trunk or tree limbs will not bind against the saw.
- Watch for branches under tension, they may spring out when cut.
- Gasoline-powered chainsaws must be equipped with a protective device that minimizes kickback.
- Be cautious of saw kickback. To avoid kickback, do not saw with the tip. If equipped, keep the tip guard in place.





BUCKLE UP OR PAY THE PRICE

CLICK IT OR TICKET

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

ZERO Fatalities*
*Based On Data 2007-2009